

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SALUTE TO OUR SOCIAL WORKERS

A big shout out and salute to Amanda Shafer, Anita Baysden, and Treese DeBoer; our social workers at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

March is designated as the month to honor social workers for their dedication, commitment and attributes.

"Social Workers are the epitome of compassion; and SDDVA is proud to employ such caring and compassionate professionals on our team," said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "A special 'thank you' to Amanda, Anita, and Treese."

Our social workers are trained to help our residents address personal and systemic barriers to optimal living. They effect positive change with our heroes and their families.



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HONOR RIDE

MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT

"RIDING TO KEEP THEM FLYING"

Sunday, June 13, 2021 | 2:30 PM

Registration begins at 12:30 PM at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance. Honor a Veteran you know and ride to raise funds for Midwest Honor Flight. Ride includes a slow salute past the Sioux Falls VA Hospital before an escort to the new South Dakota State Cemetery.

MORE INFORMATION & PRE-REGISTRATION:
[MIDWESTHONORFLIGHT.ORG/RIDE](https://midwesthonorflight.org/ride)

Midwest Honor Flight is a 100% volunteer organization. All proceeds from this event go directly towards future Honor Flight and more importantly, our local Veterans.

VABHHCS TO HOLD MOBILE COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS

On Monday, March 15, 2021, VA Black Hills Health Care System will offer mobile vaccine clinics in Sundance and Newcastle, WY. The Mobile Vet Center will serve as a vaccination clinic to reach veterans living in communities not close to a VA clinic. Appointments are required for these clinics.

Veterans choosing to be vaccinated will receive the Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) one dose vaccine. In clinical trials, the Janssen vaccine showed an efficacy of 66% against moderate to severe/critical COVID-19 disease occurring at least 28 days after vaccination — and demonstrated greater than 85% efficacy in preventing severe/critical COVID-19 disease occurring at least 28 days after vaccination.

Veterans who are enrolled and receiving health care in the VA are eligible to get the vaccine. VA Black Hills is offering the vaccine to all risk categories.

Sundance 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Crook County School District Parking Lot 122 State Highway 585	Newcastle 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Gateway Travel Center Parking Lot 5007 US HWY 16
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Veterans can schedule an appointment for either location by calling 1-800-743-1070 option # 2 between the hours of 7:30 am to 4:30 pm (MT).



VA BLACK HILLS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM BEGINS JANSSEN COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

VA Black Hills Health Care System will begin COVID-19 vaccinations with the Janssen vaccine following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization for this vaccine.

In clinical trials, the Janssen vaccine showed an efficacy of 66% against moderate to severe/critical COVID-19 disease occurring at least 28 days after vaccination — and demonstrated greater than 85% efficacy in preventing severe/critical COVID-19 disease occurring at least 28 days after vaccination.

"VA Black Hills is excited to offer a second highly effective vaccine to our veterans," said Teresa Forbes, Public Affairs Officer. "This one-dose vac-

VA receives Janssen COVID-19 vaccine



cine will help us reach our highly rural veterans to meet our ultimate goal of offering COVID-19 vaccination to all veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated." Because of storage requirements, the Moderna vaccine will remain available at the Fort Meade and Hot Springs campuses while the Janssen vaccine will be offered in rural areas throughout our service area.

As of March 3, VA Black Hills has provided Moderna COVID-19 vaccine first doses to more than 6,400 veterans and employees — and both doses to more than 3,300 of these individuals.

Veterans who are enrolled and receiving health care in VA are eligible to get the vaccine. Currently, VA Black Hills is offering the vaccine to all risk categories.

Veterans are required to enroll with VA in order to receive health care. However, to receive care in VA, enrollees must meet certain eligibility requirements under current law, which may include income limits.

Veterans can get the latest information and sign up to receive updates on VA's [COVID-19 vaccine webpage](#).

VA KICKS OFF ON-DEMAND WOMEN'S HEALTH TRANSITION TRAINING

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched its online Women's Health Transition Training course, enabling all transitioning servicewomen and recently separated women veterans to have access to information about VA women's health services.

The online, self-paced instruction is available at TAPevents.org/courses and is designed to complement VA's [Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#).

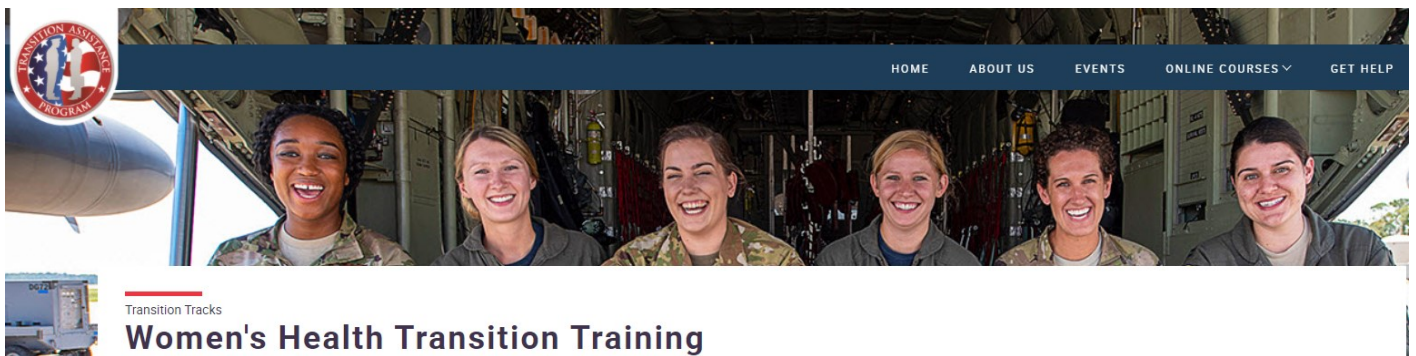
The online program provides information and resources to help participants understand VA's gender-specific health care services, enroll in VA health care as quickly as possible after separation and be better prepared to manage their post-military health care.

"The VA has presented the Women's Health Transition Training content to hundreds of women and refined it based on their feedback," said VA Office of Transition and Economic Development Acting Executive Director, Lawren-cia Pierce. "By expanding course availability online, servicewomen and women veterans worldwide are better able to learn about VA health care designed for their needs and empowered to make informed decisions about their future."

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Veteran population, but only 40% of eligible women veterans are enrolled in VA health care. The VA and the Department of Defense collaborated in 2017 to study women veterans' barriers to care and to establish a pilot training program to address these barriers.

In 2018, the VA began offering the Women's Health Transition Training at select installations and has since provided the instructor-led course in person and online to hundreds of transitioning servicewomen. Feedback from pilot participants shows the course increases awareness of women's health services available through the VA, and the on-demand course makes this important information readily available to all.

The 2.5-hour on-demand Women's Health Transition Training can be accessed at TAPevents.org/courses. Click here to learn more about [future course opportunities](#).



VA STANDS UP COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND NEW VHA UNDER SECRETARY

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established a commission to identify candidates to lead and manage the [Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\)](#).

The position is for the Under Secretary for Health, who oversees the country's largest health care system — which has an approximate annual budget of \$61 billion — and supervises the delivery of care to more than nine million enrolled veterans.

By law, the appointment is made without regard to political affiliation and solely on demonstrated ability in the medical profession, policy formulation, and health care administration and fiscal management. Those being considered must have substantial experience in connection with the programs of VHA or programs of similar content and scope.

Duties of the post include overseeing the operation of VA's more than 1,200 sites of care, including hospitals, community-based outpatient clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries and 300 Vet Centers. The candidates should have a demonstrated ability to conceptualize and implement a vision, while being an advocate who can move an ambitious agenda forward to meet the needs of veterans.

VHA is the nation's largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical and scientific research. More than 73,000 active volunteers, 123,000 health professions trainees, and 306,000 full-time health-care professionals and support staff are an integral part of the VHA community.

Click here to learn more information about the [position](#).



NEW ALLOCATION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) is now accepting applications for a new allocation of funds to help with housing assistance – rent, mortgage, and/or utilities – for households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“After helping more than 3,000 households with the first round of assistance, SDHDA recognizes that families are still struggling with uncertainties,” said Executive Director Lorraine Polak. “This additional funding helps cover families’ basic needs so they can meet their other financial obligations, too.”

The SD Cares Housing Assistance program (SDCHAP) provides direct payments to providers on behalf of applicants for rent, utility arrears, utilities, mortgage payments and mortgage delinquency, from March 13, 2020 to present. These payments are grants and do not need to be paid back.

Eligible households must have experienced a financial hardship – either directly or indirectly – because of COVID. Documentation of need and expenses will be required and income restrictions apply.

Households can apply for an assistance grant and verify their eligibility online at sdcareshousingassistance.com. SDHDA is partnering with local agencies to assist households, process applications and disburse financial assistance.

Households seeking more information can call the Helpline Center at 2-1-1 or SDHDA at 800.540.4241. South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) was created by the South Dakota Legislature in 1973 with a stated mission to provide decent, safe and affordable housing to low- and moderate-income South Dakotans. SDHDA is a self-supporting, nonprofit entity that uses no state tax dollars to fund its operating budget. SDHDA utilizes housing bonds, tax credits and other federal and state resources to fund housing programs that provide mortgage and down payment assistance, housing construction and rehabilitation, homelessness prevention and rental assistance.

A blue rectangular graphic with a white border. Inside, the text "SD CARES HOUSING ASSISTANCE" is written in bold, blue, sans-serif capital letters. In the bottom right corner, there is a small blue icon of a house with a chimney. Below the main text, a solid blue horizontal bar contains the words "LEARN MORE" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

**SD CARES HOUSING
ASSISTANCE**

LEARN MORE

SDDVA CLAIMS OFFICE STAFFING CHANGES

Bridget Poore has been promoted to serve as a state veterans service officer in our Sioux Falls Claims Office. Bridget joined our SDDVA team as a claims examiner in 2019. Bridget's military service in the United States Army provided her with a great awareness of the commitment and dedication our heroes possess and will guide her as she succeeds in working with veterans and their families.

Daniel Johnson will be joining our team the latter part of March and will serve as a state veterans service officer, replacing John Maisenbach who recently joined our team.

SDDVA is currently advertising for a claims examiner.

HUGHES COUNTY NAMES NEW VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Hughes County has selected Janet Beck as their new county veterans service officer.

Beck was born and raised in the Agar/Onida area. She served in the United States Army.

After her tour of duty, she served in law enforcement in Las Vegas, NV for 25 years. In 2015, Janet retired and moved back to South Dakota. Janet's email address is: janet.beck@co.hughes.sd.us.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Janet to our great veteran advocate network.



FDA GRANTS VA FIRST-EVER COMPASSIONATE USE FOR 3D-PRINTED HEARING DEVICE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) received [compassionate use](#) approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in February for a groundbreaking, in-house developed medical device to help improve the quality of life of a veteran with a rare hearing condition.

FDA's compassionate use authorization allows patients access to prototype medications, biologics, and medical devices for medical treatment outside of clinical trials when no comparable or satisfactory alternative therapy options exist.

"The VA was granted the ability to prescribe an experimental 3D printed audiological device specifically designed for a single patient," said VA Director of 3D Printing Network Beth Ripley, M.D., PhD.

"The 76-year-old veteran patient has a rare medical condition that causes the ear canal to collapse and muffle sound."



The 3D printed stent is inserted in the external ear canal to keep it from collapsing and allow sound to pass through. The device is not surgically implanted and can be easily removed by the patient. This unique hearing aid was designed and created by the integrated 3D printing network team at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, South Carolina.

In 2017, the VA started integrating and developing its [3D Printing Network](#). Since then, the network has expanded to more than 60 VA medical centers exploring possible uses of the technology in clinical settings.

Click here to learn more about more about VA's 3D Printing Network [VA's 3D Printing Network](#).

VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS**9 to 11 a.m****Wednesday
March 17th****SURPLUS PROPERTY****PROGRAM****WEBINAR****Wednesday, March 17th****9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Central Time***Presenter: SBA, State Agencies for Surplus Property, VBOCs, and PTACs of MN, ND, and SD.*

Public Law No. 115-416, the Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act of 2018, directs the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to give certain veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) access to federally-owned surplus personal property. Find out what that means for you in this 2-hour session covering local resources, surplus property program overview, and veteran verification.

Join the SBA, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, Veteran Business Outreach Centers, and the State Agencies for Surplus Property on the morning of Wednesday, March 17th for this virtual program launch.

Agenda:

9:00 - 9:20 - Welcome and introductions - MN, ND, and SD PTACs, VBOCs, and SBA offices

9:20 – 9:50 - State Agency introductions and Surplus Property program overview

9:50 – 10:10 - Open Q&A or break

10:10 - 10:40 - Verification for VOSB firms - required for surplus property program

10:40 – 11:00 - Closing Q&A

Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/d8sd3bf7>

This webinar series is hosted in partnership with the Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC).



SBA Co-sponsorship #19-0875-85. SBA's participation is not an endorsement of the views, opinions, products or services of any cosponsor or other person or entity. All SBA programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 19—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—DAV—1519 W. 51st Street—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)

Mar 20—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—VFW—520 Main Avenue—Brookings—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)

Mar 23—Culvers Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser

Jun 14—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—2:30 pm

June 24-27—American Legion State Convention—Huron

Aug 16-19—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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